Expansion of foreign trade

469. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking any effective steps to expand trade relations with U.S., USSR, China, Japan, U.K. and Germany;

(b) if so, the details of areas in which trade relations with the aforesaid countries have been strengthened;

(c) the details of new areas identified for the expansion of trade relations with these countries; and

(d) the details of MoU signed with the above countries to encourage the trade activities in the various field?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (d) India and USA have signed a document on the formation of Terms of Reference for the India-United States Commercial Dialogue on March 23, 2000 in New Delhi to (a) facilitate trade and (b) maximize investment opportunities across a broad range of economic sectors, including information technology, infrastructure, biotechnology and services. During the visit of Prime Minister to USA in November, 2001, both sides have agreed to resume and expand the bilateral economic dialogue, including Commercial Dialogue and working group on Trade Policy.

As on date, the erstwhile USSR does not exist. Russian Federation (Russia) is our major trading partner out of newly formed States. The main commodities of export to Russia are RMG Cotton including accessories, drugs, pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals, tea, coffee, transport equipments, processed minerals, RMG of other textile material, cotton yarn, fabrics, made ups, tobacco, RMG wool, RMG manmade fibres etc. The main items of import from Russia are iron and steel, fertilizers, non-ferrous metals, newsprint, machinery, synthetic and reclaimed rubber, organic chemicals, inorganic chemicals, primary steel etc. During the 8th Session of Indo-Russian Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation held at New Delhi on 5th and 6th February, 2002, both sides agreed to take necessary measures to ensure sustainable growth and continued diversification of mutual trade.

It has been the continuous endeavour of the Government to expand trade relations with China and Japan. The areas in which India's trade relations have been strengthened with these countries include iron ore, electrical goods, cashew, organic, inorganic chemicals, primary and semi finished iron and steel, processed minerals, manufacture of metals, etc. The new items identified for expansion of trade include shrimps and prawns, cuttle fish, oil cakes, granite, insecticides, meat of bovine animals, coffee, black tea, sesame seed, etc. In the recent past a Record Note of Discussions was signed with the Chinese delegation which visited India in connection with the conclusion of SPS Protocol.

Both U.K. and Germany are important members of European Union. India and the European Union are engaged in a continuous dialogue at different levels for addressing the various bilateral trade issues. Trade and business representatives of both sides are also in touch with each other to facilitate expansion of bilateral trade and investment between India and EU countries. Three India-EU Business Summits have been held so far for enhancement of bilateral trade and investment relations. A joint sectoral study by trade/industry representatives of both sides has been undertaken to address the issues and concerns in priority sectors. The areas covered by the study are food processing, mechanical engineering, IT and telecom and financial services, textiles, power/energy and biotechnology.

Improvement of infrastructure in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh

470. SHRI KAILASH JOSHI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have released funds for improvement in the infrastructure of industrial areas in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh;

(b) if so, the details of the funds released during the last three years;

(c) the details of the projects for which these funds were earmarked including the funds released for acquisition of land, construction of roads etc.;

(d) whether some industrial towns were earmarked for the purpose; if not, the reasons therefor; and